

## 7. Gendering entrepreneurship: a discursive analysis of a woman entrepreneur competition

**Celile Itr Göğüş, Örsan Öрге and Ozan Duygulu**

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### INTRODUCTION

Women's entrepreneurship has long been regarded as a special area of entrepreneurship with its own sub-category at academic conferences, like the RENT conference, with special issues in academic journals such as those in *Entrepreneurship and Regional Development* and *Entrepreneurship Theory and Development* and more recently with a dedicated journal, *International Journal of Gender and Entrepreneurship*. This 'special' aspect of the field is also seen in the representation of female entrepreneurship as a unique category within the larger entrepreneurship domain with special government support policies, non-governmental organizations and associations working to support its development and growth. Whether approached from a gender and occupations (that is, representation of women in the general workforce) or a feminist theory and research perspective (Jennings and Brush 2013), it is evident that women entrepreneurs and women's entrepreneurship is and will continue to be an important sub-area within the larger entrepreneurship domain.

In this chapter, we aim to contribute to this body of work on women's entrepreneurship by taking the feminist theory perspective and analyzing an entrepreneurship competition targeted at women entrepreneurs. More specifically, we focus on a prominent woman entrepreneur competition in Turkey, 'Turkey's Woman Entrepreneur Competition' and perform a critical analysis of the media discourse generated through the competition to reveal how the event serves as an arena for various forms of gender work.

Our chapter rests on extant research that views women's entrepreneurship to be a discursive performance. Although there are multiple perspectives to understanding women's entrepreneurship, we position our analysis

closer to the perspective that views the phenomenon as something that is ‘constructed’ or ‘achieved’ within and through a discursive domain. By employing this particular lens, we aim to analyze how the competition fits and feeds into the women’s entrepreneurship discourse. Accordingly, our focus in this study is not to assess the effectiveness or the outcomes of the competition but rather to analyze it as a discursive arena in which various forms of gender work are undertaken, and a particular framing of women’s entrepreneurship is performed.

In the women’s entrepreneurship literature, one particular approach to understand how women’s entrepreneurship is societally performed has been through analyses of various forms of media discourse (for example, Achtenhagen and Welter 2011; Ahl 2006; Eikhof et al. 2013). These studies are built on the premise that the media discourse on women’s entrepreneurship ‘. . . shape what people believe women business owners typically do . . .’ (Eikhof et al. 2013: 548) and ‘. . . replicate themes and notions in the specialist literature, which they merely popularize’ (Bruni et al. 2004: 259). The study we present in this chapter aims to build on this stream of research. More specifically, we aim to analyze the media discourse generated through and around an entrepreneurship competition which has the purpose of identifying the most successful women entrepreneurs and sharing their success stories with aspiring women who may one day want to become entrepreneurs themselves.

We believe that competitions are an especially relevant empirical domain to focus on and analyze for two main reasons. First, unlike mainstream media materials, such as newspaper or magazine articles, competitions have the potential to reach out to and influence a much more targeted and relevant audience. Second, by their very nature, competitions are positioned to select and showcase ‘best practice’ and, thus, create a societal norm as to what success entails in a particular domain. As such, we contend that the media discourse generated through and around a woman entrepreneurship competition has a disproportional impact on performing women’s entrepreneurship at the societal level.

Within this theoretical and empirical framework, the rest of the chapter is organized as follows. First, a brief overview of research on women’s entrepreneurship and media representation of women entrepreneurs is presented. In the next section of the chapter, the empirical context is explained with a brief note on the state of women’s entrepreneurship in Turkey. Details of the competition and the coverage of the media discourse is provided next and followed with details of the data analytical approach. The next section presents the results and findings of the study. The chapter concludes with conclusions, contributions and implications both for the competition and for practice.

## BACKGROUND: WOMEN'S ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Most research on women's entrepreneurship rests on various strands of feminist theory. For example, Harding (1987) classifies these theoretical underpinnings into three groups: liberal feminist theory, social feminist theory and social constructionist/poststructuralist feminist theory. Liberal feminist theory views men and women essentially as the same and equally capable but contends that women have been subject to inequalities. As such, using mostly quantitative tools research usually compares men and women, and focuses on explaining the differences.

Social feminist theory, on the other hand, views men and women as essentially different and states that women have distinct and different experiences from men. Accordingly, instead of questioning the male norm, this perspective suggests an alternative norm (Ahl 2006). And lastly, social constructionist/poststructuralist feminist theory is not interested in men and women per se but rather how gender (that is, masculinity and femininity) is constructed through social interactions (Ahl 2006). According to this theory, gender is 'performed' and the common methods of analysis are discourse and narrative analysis.

Cálas et al. (2009) also provide a similar classification. They categorize feminist theorizing that underlies entrepreneurship research into two groups: liberal/psychoanalytical/radical feminist theorizing, and socialist/poststructuralist/transnational feminist theorizing. Their first category is based on feminist empiricism and focuses on injustices women experience in the entrepreneurship domain. The second category is based on a social constructionist perspective and focuses on entrepreneurship as a gendered process.

The theoretical foundation of the current study presented in this chapter is based on the latter categories of both Harding's (1987) and Cálas et al.'s (2009) work. As such, we build on a view of entrepreneurship as a socially constructed and discursively performed phenomenon (Downing 2005; Fletcher 2006; Steyaert and Katz 2004; Berglund and Johansson 2007). That is, entrepreneurship, like any other social phenomena, is socially constructed and is not independent of the society it exists in (Steyaert and Katz 2004).

This particular approach requires particular attention to the role of language in the societal construction of women's entrepreneurship. As Bruni et al. (2004: 257) state '... discourses on women entrepreneurs are linguistic practices that create truth effects, that is, they contribute to the practicing of gender at the very same time that they contribute to the gendering of entrepreneurial practices'.

There is a growing body of work on women's entrepreneurship that

reflects this linguistic sensibility and analyzes how women's entrepreneurship is constructed by the media discourse. Consistent with the social constructionist perspective to understanding entrepreneurship, this body of work rests on two main assumptions: first, that media representations mirror the gendered nature of entrepreneurship; and second, that they provide an interpretive framework for reproducing the gendered nature of entrepreneurship (Eikhof et al. 2013).

To date, this body of work has analyzed various different media discourses. One of the seminal pieces of this literature is by Ahl (2006), who employed media discourse analysis to analyze academic research articles published on women's entrepreneurship. She identified several discursive practices in the data. To start with, her data revealed that 'entrepreneur is a masculine concept, that is, it is not gender neutral' (Ahl 2006: 601) showing that entrepreneurship, indeed, is a gendered activity. Another discursive practice that came out was how entrepreneurship was being framed in the articles. As it turns out, a majority of the articles made references to the 'importance of entrepreneurship for the economy' which in turn translated into an emphasis on performance and growth issues as opposed to gender issues in the research articles. Another strong discursive practice was about the essential differences between men and women (despite evidence to the contrary) and how these differences were kept alive. Some common themes here included over-emphasizing differences and under-emphasizing similarities between men and women, portraying women entrepreneurs as different than the average women and by building on the small differences with stereotypical feminine characteristics creating 'the relational and caring woman entrepreneur' (ibid.: 604). Work-family divide was another strong discursive practice identified by Ahl, whereby family is always framed as women's responsibility and 'her business is constructed as secondary and complementary to both male-owned businesses and her primary responsibility, the family' (ibid.: 605).

Another group of studies explored media discourse created by news outlets. One such example is Achtenhagen and Welter (2011) who analyzed how women's entrepreneurship is represented in German newspapers and how this representation changed over time. Their analysis of the grand discourse pointed to an underrepresentation of women's entrepreneurship in the media. The content analysis of the discussion on women's entrepreneurship revealed several interesting themes some of which included comparing and contrasting women against men which is considered the norm for entrepreneurship, reinforcing dominant gender role stereotypes (for example, being a mother and housewife comes before starting a business) and framing women's entrepreneurship as a solution for unemployment of women. It is interesting to note here that although the empirical domains

are very different, the emergent discursive themes in this study closely mirror those of Ahl (2006).

A different study was undertaken by Pietilainen (2001) who analyzed media discourse of a professional magazine of entrepreneurs published in Finland. Her analysis mainly focused on the use of language as a representational system and how the media on women's entrepreneurship (18 articles published in the aforementioned magazine) contributed to the making of gender. Just like Ahl (2006) and Achtenhagen and Welter (2011), her findings also indicated that there exists a constant comparison between women entrepreneurs to the masculine ideal of entrepreneurship under an equality discourse which leads her to question the value of this discourse in finding new solutions to a discriminating culture. More recently, Eikhof et al. (2013) employed a similar analysis on a magazine series on women entrepreneurs in England. Similar to the studies reviewed above, their data too revealed themes that related to the re-creation of the traditional gender roles through portrayal of women entrepreneurs.

To the best of our knowledge, the study presented in this chapter is a first in the literature in terms of its empirical domain. Entrepreneurship competitions, with their targeted audience and their disproportional impact in framing success norms in women's entrepreneurship, are a fitting and relevant empirical domain. In what follows, we introduce our empirical domain and research approach.

## METHODOLOGY

### **Research Context**

The empirical domain for the study presented in this chapter is the annual 'Turkey's Woman Entrepreneur Competition'. As such, to begin with, a brief account of the state of entrepreneurship in Turkey is necessary to better interpret the research context.

The early 2000s form an important time in Turkey's economic and political history as they were marked by a severe economic crisis in 2001 and a major general election in 2002 that resulted in a parliamentary overhaul. This was followed by a series of structural reforms in the economy that spanned the rest of the decade. It is during this time that entrepreneurship started to become recognized as a central and significant economic phenomenon, in a way, a landmark of the new economy (see Öрге 2013 for a thorough analysis of this period of transformation).

Women's entrepreneurship in the country also started to gain popularity during the same time period. In fact, 2002 was a significant year for women's

entrepreneurship in the country as it was the year KAGIDER (Women Entrepreneurs Association of Turkey), a non-governmental organization (NGO) with the primary purpose of increasing the number of women entrepreneurs in the business world, was established. KAGIDER's main foundational objective was to promote women's entrepreneurship and to increase the effectiveness and impact of women entrepreneurs in business, and in turn, to contribute to the economic progress of the country (Göğüş et al. 2012).

KAGIDER's foundational objective is important in the sense that it portrays an accurate picture of how women's entrepreneurship is predominantly framed in the country, that is, through an apparent economic language. Within this framing, women's entrepreneurship is presented either as a solution, almost like a quick fix, to the chronic underrepresentation of women in the workforce, or as a way to boost the economy and carry the country into a brighter future.

Despite these framings, however, '... it is impossible to talk about a holistic support policy' (Ecevit 2007: 47) on women's entrepreneurship in the country. Programs and projects aimed at women's entrepreneurship cover almost anything and everything including 'welfare increase for households, and thereby poverty alleviation, responding to the rapid decline in women's labor force participation and high ratio of women's unemployment, increasing efficiency of women's economic activities, enhancing gender equity, and achieving women's empowerment' (ibid: 45) but usually fail to deliver on any of the espoused objectives.

'Turkey's Woman Entrepreneur Competition', which constitutes the empirical domain of our chapter, is situated in this macro context and has been held since 2007. The competition is organized by one of the leading banks in Turkey, Garanti Bank, in collaboration with KAGIDER and a business magazine (*Ekonomist*). The main objective of the competition is cited as 'uncovering the business and social entrepreneurship spirit of women in our country, and help their numbers grow to levels that exist in developed countries'.

Open for applications by women who are majority shareholders in their companies, the competition aims to select and award three later stage successful women entrepreneurs each year. The competition's awards are mostly symbolic. Perhaps the most gratifying part of winning the competition is for the winners to share their success stories on the website. Participants can either self-apply or get nominated for the award. The competition receives substantial interest and press coverage each year and is one of the most well-known women's entrepreneurship activities in the country, as evidenced by the more than 6000 applications received in 2012.

## **Data and Analysis**

The main data source of the study is various media items that are generated for the competition. Most of these media items are located on two separate webpages: the official website of the competition (<http://www.kadingirisimciyarismasi.com/anasayfa.aspx>); and a special subsection of Garanti Bank's webpage targeted at women entrepreneurs and women's entrepreneurship ([http://www.garanti.com.tr/tr/kobi/kobilere\\_ozel/destek\\_paketleri/kadin\\_girisimci\\_destek.page](http://www.garanti.com.tr/tr/kobi/kobilere_ozel/destek_paketleri/kadin_girisimci_destek.page)).

These media items include all written and visual materials on the sites, ranging from promotional write-ups to interview clippings about the competition from newspapers and magazines re-posted on the website to various images, illustrations and graphics. Also available on the sites are several videos that feature the organizers/sponsors of the competition as well as some of the winners.

In addition to these, our data also includes the success stories of the winners of the competition starting from 2007 (the inauguration of the competition) until 2012, resulting in a total of 21 texts. Upon initial inspection of the data, two were eliminated from the data as they were given only for two years in a special 'social entrepreneur' category, which left us with a total of 19 texts in our final dataset. As such, our final data consisted of all the media items of the competition: promotional materials (that is, text, video and illustrations), interviews/news clippings on the competition and success stories.

Since our primary analytical purpose was to decipher how 'women's entrepreneurship' is framed and constituted through the competition, we relied on the principles of inductive qualitative data analysis (Miles and Huberman 1994). This process unfolded through multiple iterations of identifying and coding discursive units in our data and categorizing these units to generate an in-depth understanding of how women's entrepreneurship was performed through this competition.

Following the grounded theory approach to data analysis (Glaser and Strauss 1967), our data analysis consisted of the following steps: first, once all the data was compiled, organized and transcribed (that is, the videos), the three authors independently reviewed the data. This served the purpose of getting acquainted with the data and acted as preliminary preparation for the analysis stage.

Once this step was completed, the authors started an open coding process to identify the predominant narrative units within the data, first independently and then together as a group. During this stage, as these units started to accumulate and several iterations were completed, the authors then compared and contrasted these units, and then further

*Table 7.1 Sample coding units and narrative themes*

Sample narrative units	Themes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Positive discrimination</li> <li>● Essential female qualities (such as sensitiveness, practicality, etc.)</li> </ul>	Biological essentialism: women's entrepreneurship as a 'special category'
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Increase employment</li> <li>● Contribution to the national economy</li> <li>● National competitive ambitions</li> </ul>	Economic/neutral framing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Entrepreneurial spirit/'hidden' potential</li> <li>● Need for role models and encouragement</li> </ul>	Subjugation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Various symbols (teapot, lipstick, diamond ring, etc.)</li> </ul>	Stereotypical representations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Jury members vs. applicants/winners</li> <li>● No processual explanation in success stories</li> </ul>	Genderless success stories
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● No references to gender/family</li> <li>● No typical female entrepreneurship narrative elements</li> </ul>	

categorized them into larger themes. Data analysis was completed once this process was executed for a number of cycles and halted when the authors were satisfied with the final themes that emerged. Table 7.1 illustrates sample coding units as well as the final narrative themes they are grouped under.

## RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Our findings revolve around various interrelated episodes of gender work performed through the competition. Our analysis shows that, when considered in their totality, all these episodes of gendered work serve to re-enact and re-affirm the masculine norms that are already dominant in the entrepreneurship discourse.

First, within the discourse of the competition, one prevalent theme is that of 'positive discrimination' which is repeatedly brought up to serve as a justification for the very existence of the competition. With this language, women's entrepreneurship is framed as a special and different category within the larger phenomenon of entrepreneurship that has been neglected and under supported. As such, this insistence on the special nature of women's entrepreneurship can be said to rest upon 'biological essentialism' (Mirchandani 1999), which takes sexual categories for granted and

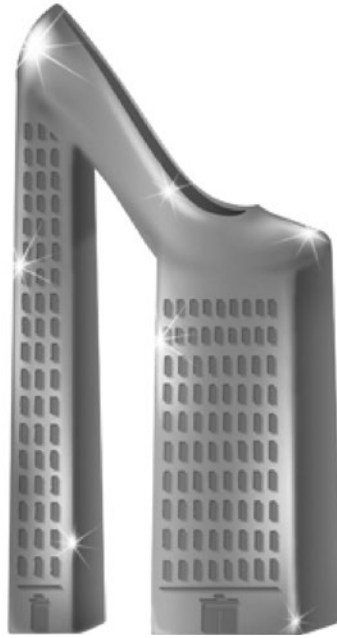


re-constitutes the difference between men and women. To be sure, this serves to single out 'women's entrepreneurship' as a distinct category 'signaling difference from the normative standard' (Lewis 2006) or even as an entrepreneurial ghetto (Bowen and Hisrich 1986; Ogbor 2000) within the larger entrepreneurship domain with its unique characteristics and challenges.

Second, this constituted difference is justified and normalized within a seemingly neutral, economic language. The official website for the competition states that the competition aims to '... draw the public's attention to women's *entrepreneur soul*, with the aim to help raise their numbers in Turkey to match that of developed countries, thus helping to increase women entrepreneurs' contribution to the Turkish economy overall'. Along the same lines, the Vice-President of Garanti Bank, who seems to be the primary spokesperson for the event, stated in a newspaper interview that 'in order to move the economy into the future in a healthy manner, we value activities targeted at woman entrepreneurs and we take some serious steps on this matter' (Sözçü 2012). In another interview, he further states that 'in addition to the development and growth of the Turkish economy, the number of women entrepreneurs should also increase the productivity of the economy' (Capital 2012). As these quotes illustrate, women's entrepreneurship potential in the country is portrayed as an untapped economic resource that needs to be better utilized. In this context, the media discourse of the competition makes frequent references to the economic value of women's entrepreneurship and the vitality of women employment on the nation's economic progress.

Third, the instrumental role attributed to women's entrepreneurship is discursively leveraged to frame 'women's entrepreneurship' as a domain of activity that direly needs special attention and support. Another official of the bank mentioned, for instance, that 'women becoming entrepreneurs is essential, before anything else, for their empowerment [because] empowered women increase their families', children's and jobs' prosperity.' In fact he continues to state his firm conviction that 'women create positive value for all industries with their *sensitive perspectives*, and that they create miracles with *more practical methods* and *smaller investments*' (Capital 2012 [our emphasis]). In another interview, the VP of the Bank echoes these statements to proudly report that 'out of the potential 29 million women in Turkey who are eligible for work, only 7 million actually have jobs. In order to turn this potential into an opportunity, we engage in positive discrimination and support their entrepreneurial endeavors' (Cumhuriyet 2012).

Within the media discourse of the competition, women entrepreneurs are subjugated to a position where they *need*, above anything else, encouragement and confidence boost. To that end, the competition is said to

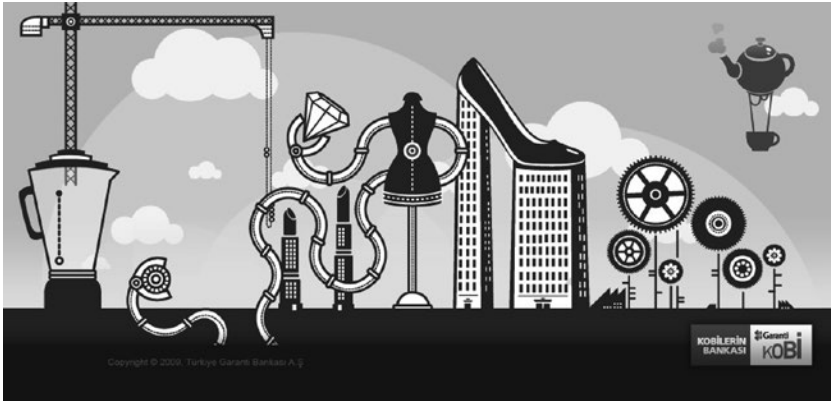


*Source:* <http://www.kadingirisimciyarismasi.com/anasayfa.aspx>. Reproduced by permission of Garanti Bank.

*Figure 7.1 The competition's logo*

benevolently generate this kind of support through identifying successful women entrepreneurs and publishing their success stories so that they can serve as role models for other aspiring women. This objective actually is clearly and openly stated on the webpage that lists the official goals of the competition: 'By uncovering entrepreneurship spirit of women, we aim to publicize their success stories and make them known as role models for women.'

Finally, various symbolic resources used in the competition discourse also hinge upon socially constructed and taken for granted gender roles, and thus feed into the societal understanding of gender. For instance, as can be seen in Figure 7.1, the logo of the competition is a high-heeled gold shoe that rises on two office-like buildings. Likewise, the illustration found on the main web page (Figure 7.2) includes several gendered objects including (but not limited to) two lipsticks, a blender, a cup and a bubbling teapot, a sparkling diamond ring, a mannequin with a mini-dress, several mechanical gears turned into flowers and the high-heeled



Source: <http://www.girisimhaber.com/post/2013/09/19/2013-Garanti-Kadin-Girisimci-Yarismasi-SonucLari.aspx>. Reproduced by permission of Garanti Bank.

Figure 7.2 Promotional illustration

gold shoe logo that are put together to resemble an industrial setting. Lastly, Figure 7.3 is a photograph that was taken during the awards ceremony. The front row are the winners for that particular year, and the back row are the jury members. What is interesting in this picture is that not only are the jury members set one step higher – almost overlooking the winners – but the jury consists predominantly of men, subtly whispering that if women are going to be recognized as ‘successful entrepreneurs’, it is obviously going to be men making this judgment call. These illustrations and photographs, in a way, remind the public at large the role of women in society (either a cook in the kitchen, or a fashionista, or inferior to men in general!), and ask them to be baffled and amused by increasing participation of women in the economy. Participation, that is, with a female touch . . .

All in all, then, the media discourse of the competition can be said to frame women’s entrepreneurship within the bounds of a masculinized understanding of entrepreneurship and marginalize women. This is not only done by using some very stereotypical symbolic resources that are widely perceived to be feminine but also through marginalizing women’s entrepreneurship as a special category that is in need of explicit attention. In fact, this interpretation is aggravated when the success stories of the competition winners are analyzed.

To start with, the success stories published on the competition website yield a very simplified and decontextualized view of ‘women’s entrepreneurship’. Without any references to the processual aspects of entrepreneurs’



Source: [http://www.kadiringirisimciyarismasi.com/tr/gecmis\\_donem\\_yarismalari/52/2011\\_yili.aspx](http://www.kadiringirisimciyarismasi.com/tr/gecmis_donem_yarismalari/52/2011_yili.aspx). Reproduced by permission of Garanti Bank.

*Figure 7.3 Awards ceremony, 2011*

experiences, stories mainly mention mere facts of their entrepreneurial journeys such as founding years, industries or production/sales figures. Even within these mere facts, no details are offered that would help readers make sense of the stories or draw inferences.

Almost in all of the success stories, the common theme is that these women became entrepreneurs almost overnight – in a way, miraculously – and successful ones at that. There are no references to the obstacles they went through, hurdles they had to tackle, how their prior experience or even dumb luck (Görling and Rehn 2008) played a role in their success. In fact, the majority of the stories do not even make any references to the quintessential elements seen in most entrepreneurial narratives; like the moment the idea is first ‘discovered’, that is, the moment of epiphany, how the business is financed or even the heroic entrepreneur image (Dodd and Anderson 2007).

Even a more surprising finding is that the success stories lack any clear references to gender. More specifically, there is no trace of gendered language in the way success stories are told. The de-gendering of the success stories are at odds with not only the announced objectives of the competition, but also the heavily gendered promotional materials analyzed

above. In fact, reading the stories, gender is invisible (Lewis 2006) and it is almost impossible to tell whether the entrepreneurial agent in the story is a woman. This contradicts with the idea of seriality of gender, that is, even if a woman does not take gender as an active identity, this does not mean that gender does not shape that woman's life (Lewis 2006). Moreover, the stories are devoid of typical elements observed in women's entrepreneurship narratives, such as references to the efforts to overcome the inherent male norm (Ahl 2004) or to balance the demands of the work and family life and motherhood in particular (Ahl 2006).

## CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Based on our analysis which revolves around how 'women's entrepreneurship' is discursively framed and constituted through a competition, we suggest that, contrary to its overt objective of empowering women entrepreneurs, the competition can be considered to subjugate women, and reaffirm and naturalize the dominant, masculine entrepreneurship discourse. In that sense, our findings contribute to the extant literature that argues for both the masculine nature (for example, Ahl 2006; Hamilton 2013) and inherent gender-blindness (for example, Lewis 2006) of the entrepreneurship discourse.

We believe that our analysis reveals a set of practices through which women's entrepreneurship is performed in our data. First and foremost, the mere categorization of women's entrepreneurship as a special class that needs tender loving care, coupled with a stereotypical characterization of women with the promotional materials and yet framing the value of women's entrepreneurship within the rational, neutral cover of economic progress of the country, discursively marginalizes women and contributes to the masculine nature of entrepreneurship discourse (Ahl 2006; Lewis 2006). Success stories, that are framed as the outcomes of the competition, furthers this marginalization and masculinization through de-gendering the main actors of the stories, the women, in a way reminiscent of the 'post-feminist masquerade' that serves to reproduce the masculine hegemony (McRobbie 2009).

We find these observations rather surprising given that the espoused objective of the competition was to generate role models for aspiring entrepreneurs through success stories. This finding makes us conclude that the success stories that come out of the competition are marked by, if anything, *absences*. It is as if 'success' for women can acceptably be constituted through narratives so long as gender is masked and context is subdued (Lewis 2006; Hamilton 2013). Put differently, successful women

entrepreneurs can only be 'heroified' through absences and their success can only be celebrated through dull business stories that contribute to the maintenance of male dominance. It appears the price successful women entrepreneurs have to pay for their success and for becoming 'role models' is to iron over their narratives and denounce their gender.

We contend that our study has two main contributions. First and foremost, our findings support the prevalent themes seen in the literature on media representation of women's entrepreneurship, albeit in a different empirical context. And second, our findings also suggest that the performance of women's entrepreneurship hinges not just on present elements in discourse (for example, biological essentialism, economic justification, subjugation, etc.), but also on absences and silences. In fact, this latter contribution is in line with gender research done in other areas of business. Billing and Alvesson (2000), for instance, in a study of women leadership, point out that femininity is performed through various definitions of success such that the women leaders who are considered to be successful are the ones who also have the most compliance with the norms of good business or in other words masculine way of business. As Olsson (2000) states, acceptance that 'gender is no longer an issue' might be the price women are willing to pay to gain access to the mainstream executive culture or entrepreneurship ecosystem in our particular situation.

Finally, we believe that our findings point out that even the best of intentions to support women's entrepreneurship may end up serving the masculine norm in the field of entrepreneurship. That is a clear reminder that such programs, and in particular, macro policy actions to foster women's entrepreneurship need to exercise extra caution not to further marginalize and subjugate the very segments of society that they intend to serve.

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